

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON BELGRADE CONFERENCE

FOLLOWING FYI IS ARTICLE ON BELGRADE CONFERENCE
WHICH APPEARED ON PAGE ONE OF MARCH 4 EDITION
OF THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BEGIN TEXT:

U.S. REBUKES SOVIET ON BELGRADE TALKS

ASSAILS BARRING OF RIGHTS STATEMENT--LANDS HUNGARY
IN TRADE PACT

WASHINGTON, MARCH 3 -- THE WHITE HOUSE REBUKED THE
SOVIET UNION TODAY FOR REFUSING TO AGREE AT THE
EAST-WEST CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE TO A FINAL COMMUNIQUE
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THAT TAKES NOTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS VOICED DURING
THE MEETING.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION INITIALED
A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH HUNGARY NOTING THE RELATIVELY
LIBERAL ATTITUDES IN THAT COMMUNIST STATE. THE
AGREEMENT CONFERS ON HUNGARY NORMAL TARIFF RATES,

THE SO-CALLED MOST-FAVORED-NATION TREATMENT. IN RETURN, HUNGARY PROMISES TO MAINTAIN EMIGRATION PRACTISES THAT ARE SATISFACTORY TO THE UNITED STATES.

THE LIFTING OF TARIFF BARRIERS WAS THE LATEST MOVE TO REWARD THE HUNGARIANS FOR THEIR POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY LIBERAL INTERPRETATION OF COMMUNISM. IN JANUARY, THE UNITED STATES RETURNED THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN, THE SYMBOL OF HUNGARIAN NATIONHOOD, WHICH HAD BEEN IN AMERICAN CUSTODY SINCE WORLD WAR II.

THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT ON THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, WHICH IS NEARING ITS CONCLUSION, TOOK NOTE OF THE SOVIET UNION'S REFUSAL TO AGREE TO A COMMUNIQUE DISCUSSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION.

SINCE ALL ACTIONS AT BELGRADE HAVE TO BE TAKEN UNANIMOUSLY, THE SOVIET OBJECTIONS FORCED THE 35-STATE CONFERENCE TO ISSUE ONLY A SHORT STATEMENT NOTING THAT THE MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE AND ANNOUNCING FUTURE ONES.

THE WHITE HOUSE SAID: QUOTE WE REGRET THAT THE SOVIET UNION FAILED TO PERMIT THE CONFERENCE TO UNCLASSIFIED

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PROCEED TO ITS PROPER CONCLUSION. WE INTEND TO PRESS THE SOVIET UNION TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENT TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS. UNQUOTE

IT SAID THAT THE SOVIET REFUSAL QUOTE IN NO WAY DETRACTS FROM THE SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE IN CONDUCTING A FULL REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS. UNQUOTE

THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE REVIEWED THE HELSINKI ACCORD, SIGNED IN AUGUST 1975, THAT CALLED FOR STEPS TO IMPROVE SECURITY AND COOPERATION. THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL AREAS OF THE PACT WERE THOSE CALLING FOR A FREER EXCHANGE OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS.

YESTERDAY, A SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL BRIEFED REPORTERS ON THE RESULTS OF THE BELGRADE MEETING, SAYING THAT THEY WERE AS SATISFACTORY AS THE UNITED STATES COULD HAVE EXPECTED. HE NOTED THE SOVIET SENSITIVITY TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES RAISED BY WESTERN AND NEUTRAL COUNTRIES,

AND SAID THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNREALISTIC
TO EXPECT THE RUSSIANS TO AGREE TO A FINAL
COMMUNIQUE THAT DISCUSSED SUCH ISSUES.

THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT, EXPRESSING IRRITATION
WITH SOVIET BEHAVIOR, WAS REPORTEDLY DRAFTED TO
HEAD OFF CRITICISM THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS
"SOFT" ON THE SOVIET UNION.

THE DECISION TO GRANT MOST-FAVORED-NATION
TREATMENT TO HUNGARY HAS MORE POLITICAL THAN
ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE, OFFICIALS SAID, SINCE
TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AMOUNTS TO
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ONLY ABOUT DOLLARS 126 MILLION AND IS NOT EXPECTED
TO RISE SOON.

BUT OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES IN EASTERN
EUROPE, ONLY POLAND AND RUMANIA ARE ENTITLED TO
NONDISCRIMINATORY TARIFFS. HUNGARY'S DECISION
TO AGREE TO LIBERAL EMIGRATION PRACTICES SURPRISED
AMERICAN OFFICIALS, WHO HAD BELIEVED THAT BUDAPEST
WOULD FOLLOW MOSCOW'S EXAMPLE AND TERM SUCH A PLEDGE
INTERFERENCE IN ITS DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

END TEXT.

CHRISTOPHER

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